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MN970485: Technology Advances Naval Hospital Twentynine
Palms To Paperless Command
TWENTYNINE PALMS, CA -- Move over internet, Naval
Hospital Twentynine Palms (NHTP) has intranet technology.
This intranet is making some paper reports, directives
and files obsolete.

NHTP utilized advancements in computer technology to
accomplish one of the strategic goals established by the
Navy's Surgeon General, VADM Harold M. Koenig.

The effort to have a paperless command is the result of
a collaboration between Wayne Menard, Central Files
Department Head and the Management Information Department
(MID) staff.

HMC Duane Olson and Andy Wurst of MID and Menard began
the paperless endeavor by placing all hospital directives on
the hospital's intranet web page for easy and immediate
access by all staff members.

"It has become obvious that intranets are becoming the
foundation for new business applications. In the not so
distant future intranets will transition from 'nice to have'
to 'critical business platforms,' impacting everything from
how to support and train users, to how network traffic is
forecasted," said Menard.

Having the hospital directives stored electronically eliminates the need for space consumption in filing cabinets throughout the hospital. Pen and ink changes are a thing of the past. When changes do occur, central files can easily make the change to the original electronic file copy.

Forms stored electronically can be easily and immediately made available to those using the intranet. Also, electronic storage eliminates the costly need of reproduction. Last year NHTP reproduced more than 1.8 million in paper.

To further cut down on the reproduction cost, NHTP will be distributing the Plan of the Day (POD) electronically to staff members via e-mail.

By Dan Barber, Navy Hospital Twentynine Palms

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MN970486: Western Pacific Baby Specialist To Arrive-Jan '98

The new year will bring relief for many expectant mothers in the Western Pacific.

Under the direction of the Navy's head obstetrician CAPT Steve Remenga, a program of rotating a maternal fetal specialist will begin in January 1998.

Although this specialist will be home based at U.S. Naval Hospital Okinawa, the physician will also be available to travel to all military medical facilities in the Western Pacific to help hospitals from Korea to Guam with their most difficult cases. "We are trying to provide care for the complicated pregnancy that often also requires the services provided by our Air Force staffed Neonatal Intensive Care Unit," explains CDR Jack Klausen, head of obstetrics at Naval Hospital Okinawa. This exciting program hopes to save dollars and time for our expectant mothers here in the Western Pacific.

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MN970487: CNO Sends Military Family Appreciation Week

Message To The Fleet

WASHINGTON, DC -- The week of November 23 has been designated as Military Family Appreciation Week by the Secretary of Defense.

The Chief of Naval Operations released this message to the fleet:

"During this period, we pause to reflect on the outstanding service and commitment of our military families to our men and women in uniform, and it is especially fitting during the Thanksgiving holiday season that we honor them with a special tribute. Our active duty and reserve force relies heavily on the support of spouses, children, parents, and extended family members throughout the year.

"This week allows us to highlight the significant contributions and personal sacrifices Navy families make with frequent moves and extended periods of separation, both unique to Navy life. By taking full advantage of community and family support programs and activities available at our

installations around the world, we continue to enrich the lives of our Sailors and their families.

"As we celebrate military family appreciation week, all units and installations are encouraged to recognize the superb contributions of our Navy families -- the force behind the fleet."

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MN970488: Asthma Clinic Helps Patients Breathe Easy

PORTSMOUTH, VA -- Pediatric asthma patients at Naval Medical Center (NMC) Portsmouth's asthma clinic are breathing easier thanks to the clinic's one-step evaluation and treatment.

The clinic is open every Wednesday from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. and usually sees an average of 50 patients per month. Staffed with a respiratory therapist, a nurse, a nurse practitioner, a physician, and either an intern or resident, it offers young asthma patients an easy way to get a physical, review medications, and complete any special treatment needed in just 60 to 90 minutes.

"We try to make things as easy as possible for our young patients," said LT Janet Gehring, asthma clinic nurse. "Parents find it much easier to bring their child here and get everything done at once."

Upon check-in, the patient's vital signs are taken. The patient then undergoes a pulmonary function test to measure breathing. If their breathing is not within a certain range, which varies from person to person, the patient will be treated with a nebulizer (NEB). The NEB is a piece of equipment that contains a prescribed dosage of medication to help open a patient's bronchial tubes and facilitate breathing.

The pulmonary function test results are reviewed with a nurse, and then a general assessment is taken. The general assessment consists of checking medication and vaccination plans. The nurse will also ask the parents several questions, such as the type of environment the child lives in or whether the parent smokes.

"If a parent smokes, we tell them to smoke outside as much as possible. They should avoid smoking in the car as well," said Gehring.

After the general assessment, a physician also checks the patient's pulmonary functions by feeling the chest, head, and neck; listening to the lungs; and examining chest x-rays if needed. The physician also reviews the patient's medication plan and procedures utilizing a new computer software program developed by pediatric physician LCDR Dave Thomas, MC.

The patient's final stop is with a respiratory therapist who reviews the entire treatment protocol and ensures the patient and his or her family completely understand the medication plan.

This special one-stop evaluation and treatment procedure is just one way NMC Portsmouth is making life

easier for asthma patients.

By LT Lisa Brackenbury, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth
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MN970489: Naval Submarine Base New London Social Worker
Chosen As Navy's Best

GROTON, CT -- The 1997 LCDR Joseph DiPaolo Memorial Social Worker of the Year Award has been awarded to Susanne Carter of Naval Submarine Base New London, CT. Carter was recognized for her work with family advocacy programs at the Navy's Social Work Conference in Baltimore.

The award was sponsored by the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery and Bureau of Naval Personnel's Social Work Committee. Carter, now the Family Advocacy Regional Coordinator for the Northeast Region, has worked in a variety of social service capacities for the Navy since 1989.

"I feel very proud," said Carter about her award. "We all work hard at our field, and something like this just really symbolizes all of your achievements."

In 1995, as the Navy's Domestic Violence Program Manager, she was instrumental in establishing a victim advocacy program for victims of spousal abuse. She defined the role of the Victim Service Specialist as well as the counselors for children who witness violence.

As the chair of the Department of Defense's (DOD) Training Subcommittee of the Family Advocacy Committee, she led four working groups to revise the DOD Family Advocacy Staff Training course. She also wrote part of the curriculum and was a faculty member of the Family Advocacy Command Assistance Team (FACAT) training. The FACAT is a joint service pool of professionals who travel to military installations to investigate cases of multiple-victim, child sexual abuse cases.

"I think the victim advocacy program in the Navy is something that we've needed for a very long time," said Carter. "I know that in places where they now have them, we think that we're reaching a lot more victims and we're providing a service that they were very much lacking before."

Courtesy of Naval Submarine Base New London

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MN970490: USS Guam Medical Team Shines

(Aboard USS Guam (LPH 9) at sea) -- Ashore, it's nice to have the security of medical facilities, to know that if anything happened to you or your family, medical personnel are nearby to assist. But what happens when you're out to sea?

If you're part of the USS Guam amphibious ready group (ARG), care is provided by Guam's extensive medical facilities, hospital corpsmen and embarked fleet surgical team six (FST6). USS Guam ARG consists of the flagship USS Guam (LPH 9), USS Ashland (LSD 48), USS Shreveport (LPD 12) and USS Oak Hill (LSD 51).

Just ask GSMFN Karl Vandosten, stationed aboard USS Ashland. While the ARG was deployed to the Mediterranean taking part in Exercise Bright Star '98, Vandosten started to feel stomach pains. It turned out to be more than a stomach ache, and Ashland's medical officer decided Vandosten needed immediate attention -- attention the ship wasn't equipped to give.

"The ship's doctor was very concerned about his abdominal exam," explained CDR Stanley A. Napierkowski, FST6 general surgeon. USS Guam's medical staff and hospital, complete with surgical suite, pharmacy and x-ray lab was ready.

Vandosten was medevaced to USS Guam and was found to have a ruptured appendix. Surgery took place immediately.

"The surgery only took about 90 minutes," said HM3 William Westbrook an operating room technician with FST6. "It was a real smooth surgery. I think it's remarkable, only an hour and ten minutes elapsed between the time we received the call to the time we started the case," said Napierkowski. "It was very heartening to see the operating room team perform as well as they did."

After the surgery, Vandosten remained on board for monitoring and continued care.

"It's absolutely essential that we know the status of the patient after surgery, because he or she is vulnerable to things that will lead to more complications, like infection," explained HM2 Adrian R. Deleon, an operating room technician assigned to Guam's medical department.

The Sailors and Marines of the ARG are assured competent, quality medical care, just like at home, even while deployed due to the efforts of the doctors, nurses and corpsmen attached to the four-ship group. "We are a full service hospital, taking care of urgent and emergency cases and some elective surgeries," explained Napierkowski. "We provide the same kind of care you'd get at home."

By JO2(SW) Michael Wagner, USS Guam

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MN970491: Holiday Mail Deadlines Set

WASHINGTON DC -- U.S. Postal Service officials have set holiday mailing deadlines to help ensure timely delivery of packages around the world.

November 24 is the deadline for surface mail to Canada. Surface mail deadlines to the Caribbean, Europe and some other countries have already passed, officials noted.

December 1 is the deadline for air mail packages. Other key deadlines include:

-- December 1 for air cards and letters to reach Africa and Central and South America.

-- December 1 for air parcel post to reach Africa, Australia, New Zealand and Central and South America.

-- December 8 for air parcel post to the Caribbean, Europe, Far East, Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

-- December 8 for air cards and letters to reach Australia,

New Zealand, the Caribbean, Europe, the Far East, Southeast Asia and the Middle East.

-- December 12 for air parcel post, air cards and letters to Canada.

Deadlines for air letters, priority mail, parcel airlift, and space-available mail to any APO/FPO are:

-- Parcel airlift, November 21.

-- Space-available mail, November 21.

-- Air letters and priority mail, December 1.

For U.S. domestic ZIP codes, deadlines are:

-- Space-available mail, December 1.

-- Priority, December 5.

-- Air letters, December 12.

The Postal Service also suggested the following tips when sending mail:

-- Contact the Postal Service's Internet web site -- www.usps.gov for help calculating required postage for mailings, the latest address information and gift ideas.

-- Always use complete address information such as the apartment or suite numbers in an address and correct directionals such as "N," "W," "SW," and "Ave.," "Blvd." and "St."

-- Using the wrong ZIP code will delay delivery of cards and letters. Local post offices and the Postal Service web site offer ZIP code information.

-- Use filament tape for sealing packages for mailing; make sure contents are well padded and the box is sturdy. The only writing on the outside of the package should be the addresses of the sender and the intended recipient.

-- Always use a return address when mailing cards, letters or packages.

-- Purchase convenient packaging materials including boxes and padding materials, now available at local post offices. Express and priority mail boxes, envelopes and tubes are free.

-- Try an alternate holiday stamp-purchasing options including stamps-by-phone (800-782-6724), stamps-by-mail, stamps from postal vending machines and stamps from automatic teller bank machines.

Courtesy of Navy Wire Service

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MN970492: TRICARE Question and Answer

QUESTION: I have heard that one of my benefits under TRICARE is I'll have a nurse advisor available to me. What specifically is a nurse advisor?

ANSWER: Nurse advisors are available to you by phone in most regions. They provide advice and assistance that will enhance patient decision-making about their health care. They normally are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and can discuss treatment alternatives, symptoms, illness prevention or can advise whether a situation warrants immediate medical attention. The nurse advisor is available to Department of Defense beneficiaries whether you

are enrolled in TRICARE Prime or not.

For additional information on nurse advice lines in your area contact your local TRICARE Service Center or the Health Benefits Advisor at your local military medical command.

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MN970493: Healthwatch: Have A Healthy Turkey Day

YOKOSUKA, Japan -- There is nothing more satisfying during the holidays than sitting down to a table full of delicious home-cooked foods. However, the festivities can turn into a nightmare if you or your guests become ill with a food-borne illness. Learn to prevent a party crashing disaster.

Bacteria that will cause food-borne illnesses occur and reproduce rapidly when food is kept in the danger zone. That is the temperature between 40 and 140 degrees. Always remember to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Hot foods should be kept at or above 140 degrees. Cold foods should be kept at 40 degrees or less. Keep in mind these two guidelines, and your holiday feasts will be safe and delicious.

If you are preparing a turkey, give the bird at least 1 day for every 5 pounds of weight to thaw in the refrigerator. Never thaw your turkey on the counter at room temperature. At room temperature the bird will thaw on the outside, but is still frozen on the inside, thus placing it in the danger zone for bacterial growth.

Clean the bird thoroughly, washing inside and out, removing the neck and giblets from the cavity. If you are going to stuff the turkey, do so immediately before cooking. Do not overstuff the cavity; this will keep the food from cooking thoroughly. Insert a meat thermometer into the thigh of your bird, keeping it away from the bone. Your bird will be cooked when the meat thermometer registers 180 degrees. Juices from the bird should run clear, not pink, and the legs should wiggle in their sockets. Finally, cook the turkey at a temperature above 325 degrees. Turkey breasts should be cooked at 170 degrees. Cooking at low temperatures allows meat to remain too long in the danger zone, and won't allow for adequate killing of dangerous bacteria.

Allow the turkey to rest for 15 minutes before carving. After the feast, cut all the meat off the turkey, place all leftovers in small, shallow containers and refrigerate or freeze. In the refrigerator, leftover turkey and stuffing will last 3-4 days; and gravy, only 1-2 days.

Remember these food safety methods, and keep in mind the importance of frequent hand washing. Follow the motto of "keep hot foods hot, cold foods cold" and your holiday feasts will be merry and bright.

By ENS Ardash White, USNH Yokosuka

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Attention editors: Due to the Thanksgiving holiday MEDNEWS will not be published the week of November 24.

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Feedback and comments are welcome. Story submissions are encouraged. Contact MEDNEWS editor, at e-mail <mednews@bms200.med.navy.mil>, telephone 202/762-3218 (DSN 762-3218), or fax 202/762-3224.